discussions with Saudi authorities in September, 2003 and accordingly concluded agreements on Haj 2004 arrangements. A statement on measures to provide better facilities to Haj Pilgrims for the year 2004 is enclosed (See below).

(b) Yes, Sir.

Statement

Facilities to Haj Pilgrims

a. Air Operations:—To facilitate returning Haj pilgrims, the number of destinations in India, where they could return directly from Madinah has been increased from 2 in 2003 to 3 in 2004 with the help of Saudi Arabian Airlines.

b. Accommodation in Makkah:—Action has been taken to ensure that accommodation in Makkah would continue to be in buildings with lifts and space-norms as prescribed.

c. Mina stay:—Discussions have been held with the South Asian Moassassa to ensure that a greater number of pilgrims are accommodated nearer the Jamarat in Mina.

d. Communication facilities to pilgrims:—Arrangements have been made to provide communication facilities to pilgrims whereby pilgrims can communicate with their relatives, through internet.

e. Identification stickers to pilgrims:—To enable easy identification of pilgrims, stickers with Indian flags are being provided to every pilgrim, which he/she is required to display on their clothing.

f. Welfare of pilgrims:—The numbers of Doctors and Paramedical staff being deployed for Haj-2004 has been increased from 94 Doctors and 92 Paramedical staff in Haj-2003 to 105 Doctors and 110 Paramedical staff in Haj-2004.

Indians in British Jails

262. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 204 Indians are languishing in British jails; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to get them released and bring back?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes. Approximately 200 Indians are presently in British jails.

(b) Our Mission/Posts in Britain provide all possible assistance to the Indian nationals imprisoned in jails ensuring their welfare and proper living conditions as well as facilitating speedy repartriation after confirmation of their identity.

Indo-Israel Agreements

263. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: SHRI ABANI ROY: SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister of Israel visited India recently and held discussion on several important issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of agreements signed with Israel;

(d) the extent to which Government would be benefited by such agreements;

(e) whether the visit was on the invitation extended to him by the Government; and

(f) if so, the date of the invitation extended.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) Prime Minister of Israel paid a State visit to India on September 8-10, 2003. During the visit, the two sides held discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues.

(c) The following six bilateral documents were signed during the visit:

1. Agreemnt on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment.
2. Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Health and Medicine.
3. Agreement on Cooperation in combating illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.